

Message Text

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SUBJECT: REPUBLIC DAY STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT KORUTURK AND CHIEF
OF THE TURKISH GENERAL STAFF

1. IN KEEPING WITH TRADITION, MOST POLITICAL, GOVERNMENT
AND MILITARY LEADERS ISSUED STATEMENTS OCTOBER 29 IN
COMMEMORATION OF THE 53RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE
TURKISH REPUBLIC. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST ON SUCH OCCASIONS
ARE THE STATEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHIEF OF THE
GENERAL STAFF BECAUSE THE INCUMBENTS OF THESE POSITIONS,
WHICH ARE THEORETICALLY ABOVE POLITICS, OFTEN TAKE THE
OCCASION OF SUCH FORMAL PUBLIC STATEMENT TO ADDRESS THEMSELVES
TO POLITICAL ISSUES.

2. IN HIS STATEMENT, PRESIDENT KORUTURK CRITICIZED
EXTREMIST POLITICAL MOVEMENTS ON THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT.
HE SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZED "SO-CALLED SOCIALISTS,"
"FANATICS WHO USE RELIGION FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES" AND
THOSE WHO PERPETUATE "ANACHRONISTIC SUPER RACE MYTHS."
PRESIDENT KORUTURK ALSO COMPLAINED THAT THE MECHANISMS
OF THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH PROTECT FREEDOM WERE BEING ABUSED

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BY THOSE WHO ATTACK FREEDOM. HE URGED PROSECUTORS AND

JUDGES NOT TO PERMIT THOSE ARRESTED FOR ENDANGERING THE SECURITY OF THE STATE TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT PROSECUTION. KORUTURK ALSO CRITICIZED THOSE SMALL ELEMENTS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES WHO WERE NOT PERFORMING THEIR DUTIES IN AN IMPARTIAL MANNER.

3. COMMENT: THE PRESS IN REPORTING REPUBLIC DAY FESTIVITIES ALLEGES THAT PRESIDENT KORUTURK DELIBERATELY SNUBBED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ALPASLAN TURKES, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXTREME RIGHT-WING NATIONLIST ACTION PARTY (NPA), BY REFUSING TO SHAKE HANDS WITH HIM AT THE CEREMONY MORNING OF OCTOBER 29. A SIMILAR SNUB REPORTEDLY OCCURRED ONCE BEFORE. KORUTURK HAS MANY TIMES MADE CLEAR HIS DISTASTE FOR POLITICAL EXTREMISM INCLUDING TURKES' FAR-RIGHT NATIONALISM ("ANACHRONISTIC SUPER RACE MYTHS"). THE IMPLIED CRITICISM IN HIS STATEMENT OF THE ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) ("FANATICS WHO USE RELIGION FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES") IS LIKEWISE PART OF A CONTINUING PUBLIC DEBATE BETWEEN KORUTURK AND THAT GROUP. HIS CRITICISM OF THE "SOCIALISTS" ON THE LEFT IS LESS CLEARLY DIRECTED AT ANY SPECIFIC GROUP, ALTHOUGH THE LEADERS OF THE TURKISH WORKERS' PARTY, SOCIALIST PARTY, AND TURKISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY ALL MADE PUBLIC STATEMENTS CRITICIZING KORUTURK'S STATEMENT. END COMMENT.

4. THE STATEMENT ISSUED BY CHIEF OF TURKISH GENERAL STAFF SANCAR DWELT IN ITS SUBSTANTIVE PORTION ON THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. HE SAID THE TURKISH MILITARY CONTINUES TO FULFILL ITS HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY TO GUARD AGAINST THOSE FORCES WHICH WOULD ATTEMPT TO DESTROY DEMOCRACY AND THE PRINCIPLES AND REFORMS OF ATATURK. HE CRITICIZED ELEMENTS OF THE PRESS FOR "TRYING TO INVOLVE THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES" IN POLITICAL ARGUMENTS "THAT ARE OUTSIDE OF THE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ARMED FORCES." AND HE WARNED THAT THOSE WHO TRY TO ADVISE THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES CONCERNING THEIR POLITICAL OR CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES "WILL DO HARM RATHER THAN GOOD."

5. COMMENT: SANCAR'S STATEMENT CLEARLY HAS POLITICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPLICATIONS, BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR AT WHOM THEY ARE DIRECTED. CONSERVATIVE OBSERVERS HAVE CHOSEN TO INTERPRET SANCAR'S COMMENTS AS A MILD REBUKE DIRECTED AT REPUBLICAN PEOPLES' PARTY (RPP) CHAIRMAN ECEVIT FOR HIS RECENT STATEMENTS ACCUSING THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT OF TRYING TO INVOLVE THE MILITARY IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THOSE OBSERVERS SYMPATHETIC WITH ECEVIT TEND TO INTERPRET SANCAR'S STATEMENT AS A WARNING TO DEMIREL

NOT TO ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE THE MILITARY IN POLITICS.
REGARDLESS, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT OF SANCAR'S
STATEMENT IS HIS REAFFIRMATION THAT THE TURKISH MILITARY
BELIEVES ITSELF TO HAVE A POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY AND
WILL CONTINUE TO CARRY OUT THAT RESPONSIBILITY AS IT SEES
FIT.
MACOMBER

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